British Waterways

A GUIDE TO CYCLING & WALKING AROUND WALSALL

PARKLAND, PICASSO AND A PROUD INDUSTRIAL PAST

The canal is central to Walsall's development. Walk or cycle beside it and you cannot fail to be impressed by the way the town is reinventing itself around its historic waterway.

The Walsall Town Wharf is home to the £22 million New Art Gallery, hailed as one of the most exciting to be built in the UK for 20 years. Just a short walk from the town centre is the magnificent Arboretum, which contains over 80 acres of parks, lakes and gardens. Residents and visitors alike are spoilt for choice when it comes to places to enjoy a leisurely stroll or relaxing bike ride.

And, with the ever changing seasons and the pace of restoration, there's always something new to see.This handy guide is a brief introduction to some of the great walks and cycle routes just waiting to be discovered in Walsall.

WALK OF ART

A specially designed circular walk, starting from Walsall's New Art Gallery, passing through changing landscapes.

Location:
Walsall Town Wharf, Walsall
Start / Finish:
New Art Gallery, Gallery Square
Distance: 4 miles/6.5 km (approx)
Duration: 1 hour 20 mins (approx)
Type: Circular
Conditions: Hard surfaced/flat/some areas may become muddy in wet weather, suitable footwear is advised.
Access point: Gallery Square, Walsall Town Wharf
Car parking: Wolverhampton Street/Crown Wharf Retail Park

1. Set off from The New Art Gallery – home to 350 works by famous artists including Picasso and Van Gogh.

2. Walk down The Town Arm Canal and cross the roving bridge, designed to allow horses pulling narrowboats to change towpaths without untying the rope.

3. Continue along the towpath past the old Albion Flour Mill, dating back to 1849. You can still see the covered canal dock where narrowboats offloaded grain and loaded flour.

4. Following the flight of 8 locks, known as Walsall Locks, look out for sparrowhawks and kingfishers.

5. Leave the canal and walk along Reedswood Way heading towards Pouk Hill passing a retail park, fishing pool and housing estate.

6. Leaving Pouk Hill, cross over Bentley Lane, along Birchover Road, heading towards Reedswood Park. Before the Industrial Revolution this was an area of mixed woodland, pasture and heath. Reedswood Park extends to 48 acres and was converted from pit mounds in the 1880s.

7. From Reedswood Lane turn left onto Old Birchills Street and rejoin the canal for the return journey, passing a former toll house and Boatman's Rest.

CLAYHANGER COMMON WALK

For the adventurous walker, the map details the entire Four Commons Walk. This shorter, circular route follows The Wyrley & Essington Canal to Clayhanger Common – one of Walsall's much-loved areas of green, open space.

Location: Walsall
Start / Finish: Wood Lane, Pelsall Wood
Distance: 6 miles/9.5km (approx)
Duration: 2 hours (approx)
Type: Circular
Conditions: Much of the route is on existing footpaths, but some areas may be muddy, suitable footwear is advised.
Access point: Wood Lane
Car parking: Bridge Street, Clayhanger/Engine Lane, Brownhills/Wood Lane Pelsall, (opposite the Free Trade Pub)

1. Facing the Common, walk left along the road turning right onto the towpath before the bridge.

2. Passing the iron bridge at Pelsall Junction with The Cannock Extension Canal to the left, follow the towpath past the Royal Oak pub which, historically, brewed its own ale for boatmen.

3. The canal meanders through varied scenery that is home to a diversity of wildlife. A stepped iron footbridge at Brownhills provides access to a supermarket and marketplace.

4. At Catshill Junction the canal branches off towards Anglesey Basin, but follow the canal to the right. Continuing past the weir, take the footpath after Bridge Street Bridge leading onto Clayhanger Common.

5. Crossing the Common, rejoin the towpath and retrace your steps back to the car park and why not finish your walk with a well-earned drink at a choice of two excellent pubs?

An alternative 1 hour linear route, starting at Pelsall Junction, follows the quiet Cannock Extension Canal passing traditional narrowboats and a woodland conservation area. Home to rare great crested newts, the canal is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. This route is also ideal for cycling.

CYCLE ROUTES

The routes described form part of the Birmingham and Black Country Cycle Routes. Numerous points of interest can be found along their varying landscapes.

If you are feeling particularly energetic, why not cycle more than one route? The map highlights access points and road accesses, but parking may be on road in places.

SNEYD JUNCTION TO CANNOCK EXTENSION CANAL

Distance: 5.5 miles/8.8 km (approx)
Duration: 45 mins (approx)
Access point:
Willenhall Lane/Wood Lane
A semi-rural route following the curves of the canal, until it opens out into parkland at the Cannock Extension.

CANNOCK EXTENSION CANAL TO LONGWOOD JUNCTION

Distance: 7 miles/11.2 km (approx)
Duration: 1 hour (approx)
Access point: Wood Lane/Pelsall
This route leads you past Clayhanger Common and through Rushall, with a pub along the way.

LONGWOOD JUNCTION TO RUSHALL LOCKS

Distance: 1.5 miles/2.4 km (approx)
Duration: 15 min (approx)
Access point: Aldridge Road/ Walsall Road, Aldridge
A straight ride, beginning close to Hay Head Local Nature Reserve and continuing to the Rushall Lock Flight.

Advantage West Midlands
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European Regional Development Fund

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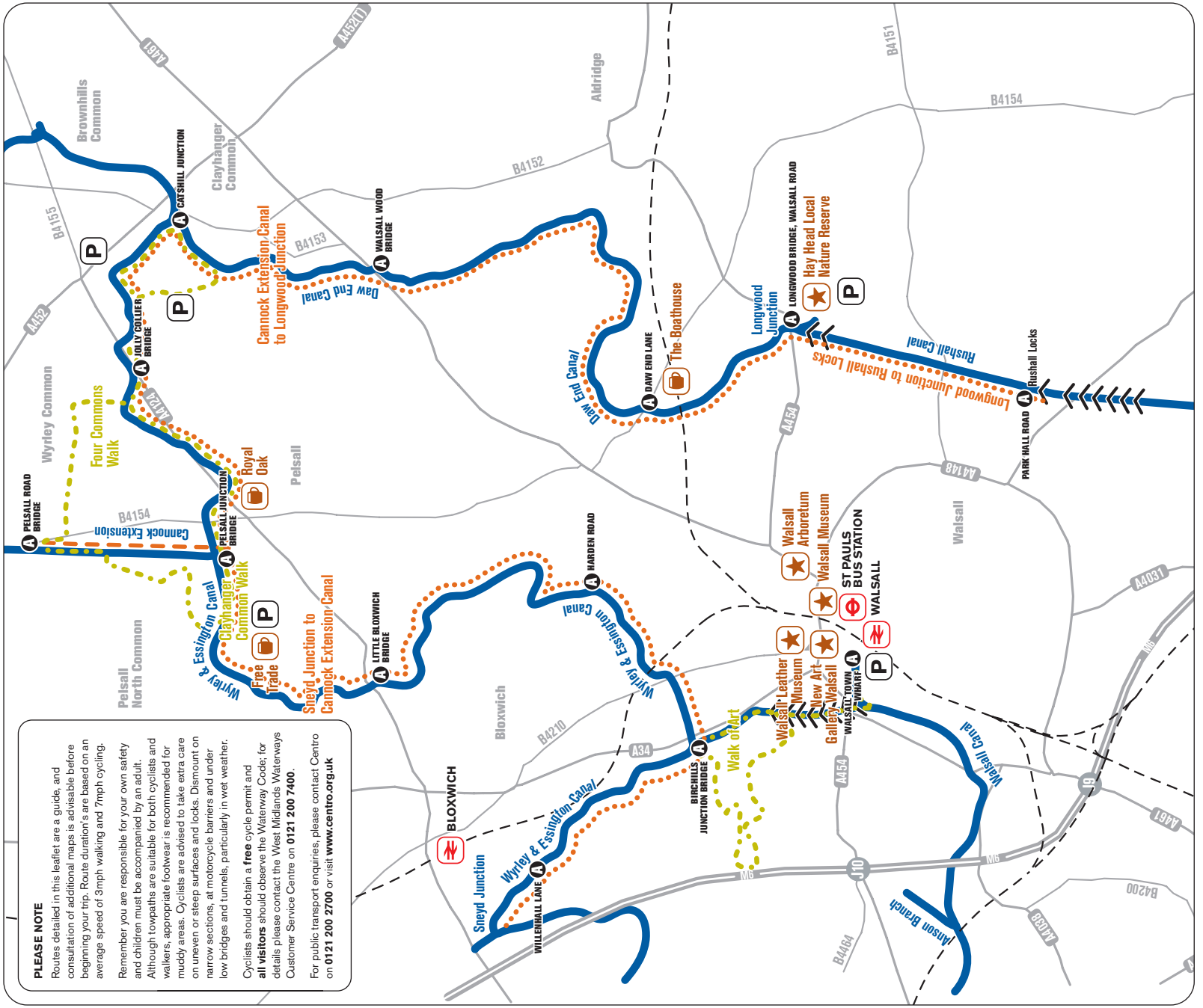
WHERE TO GO CYCLING & WALKING AROUND THE WALSALL AREA

KEY

- Cycling Route
- Walking Route
- National Cycling Route
- Rail Station
- Car Park
- Attraction
- Lock
- Access Point
- Canal
- Tunnel
- Road
- Railway
- Motorway



PLEASE NOTE

Routes detailed in this leaflet are a guide, and consultation of additional maps is advisable before beginning your trip. Route duration's are based on an average speed of 3mph walking and 7mph cycling.

Remember you are responsible for your own safety and children must be accompanied by an adult. Although towpaths are suitable for both cyclists and walkers, appropriate footwear is recommended for muddy areas. Cyclists are advised to take extra care on uneven or steep surfaces and locks. Dismount on narrow sections, at motorcycle barriers and under low bridges and tunnels, particularly in wet weather.

Cyclists should obtain a **free** cycle permit and **all visitors** should observe the Waterway Code; for details please contact the West Midlands Waterways Customer Service Centre on **0121 200 7400**.

For public transport enquiries, please contact Centro on **0121 200 2700** or visit **www.centro.org.uk**

Sources of further information:

West Midlands Waterways
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2 Canalside
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Birmingham B1 2NX

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E enquiries.wmw@britishwaterways.co.uk
www.britishwaterways.co.uk
www.waterscape.com

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